

# Red River Cultural District Plan

CITY OF AUSTIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

DOWNTOWN COMMISSION

JULY 20, 2016



## Austin's Prosperity Engine

### Citizens

We build programs that create a better future for all Austinites.

### Businesses

We help Austin's businesses and entrepreneurs reach their full potential.

### Neighborhoods

We revitalize, energize and uplift Austin's diverse local communities and neighborhoods.

## Soul-y Austin Overview

**Soul-y Austin** is a program of the City of Austin Economic Development Department that strives to accomplish the following:

- Provide a **flexible set of tools** to assist businesses in the formation of **merchants associations**;
- **Empower, engage and educate** the business community;
- Promote and support **businesses of all sizes and types** within the city's commercial areas and corridors;
- Create ideal conditions for **organized commercial districts**;
- Support **vibrant, functional and stable** commercial districts that further promote a socially and economically healthy Austin; and,
- Develop strong **internal and external partnerships**.



Goal:  
To provide a framework for sustainable business district planning and implementation

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## Mission Statement

The Red River Cultural District is a creative community that provides deeply-rooted and authentic local music, food, and cultural experiences for every artist, fan and guest.

Success Measures:

- Increased sales revenue
- Diversity of businesses
- Preservation and retention of businesses
- Beautification and enhancements
- Increased pedestrian activity



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## Key Milestones

- **October 2013**

Red River Cultural District Established by City Council (District Boundaries 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street)

- **June 2015**

Soul-y Austin and Red River Partnership begins

- **February 2016**

Red River Cultural District Merchants Association Formed (District Boundaries 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 12<sup>th</sup> Street)



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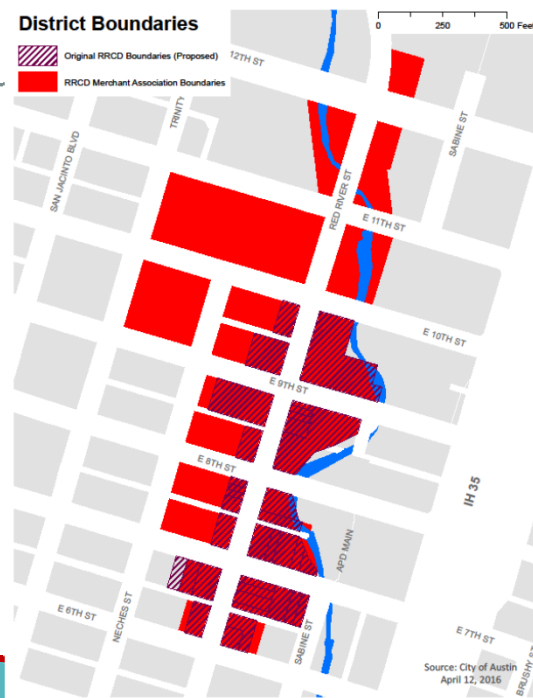
## District Boundaries

### Major Anchors

- Stubb's Bar-B-Q
- Mohawk
- German Texan Heritage Society
- Symphony Square
- Waller Creek

### Cultural District Boundaries

### Red River Merchant Association Boundaries



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## Red River Cultural District Process

### What is a District Plan?

A business district improvement strategy undertaken in concert and shared among businesses in a district, the City and other stakeholders. Identifies goals, needs, and actions that will benefit all district businesses as a whole.

### Who creates the District Plan?

Businesses in the district and key supporting organizations and leaders created the content through the facilitated process.

### Next Steps

The businesses in the district have formed a merchants association in which the district plan will guide their efforts in partnership with the City to improve their district through implementation.



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## District Focus

- Economic Growth
- Music, Culture and Arts
- Livability and Sustainability
- Green Infrastructure
- Land Use and Regulations
- Connectivity and Transportation



Business District Workshop, November 2015

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## Economic Growth

### Revise policies and programs managing sound levels in the RRCD

- Entertainment license
- "Agent of Change" principle
- Music Venue Loan Program

### Create and maintain a safe business district environment

- Safety committee
- Lighting, design solutions for recessed doorways, alleys

### Increase daytime activity within the district to attract customers

- Temporary Placemaking for activation
- Streetscape enhancements
- New activities, farmers market, breakfast, day time entertainment



### Economic Growth

Promote business diversity and resilience, job growth and partnerships to support commercial districts that anchor and reflect their neighborhoods.



## Economic Growth

### Hold signature events to increase activity and attract patrons

- Formalize "Free Week"
- Establish District Night Market

### Undertake Façade Improvements

- Maintenance of public space
- Landscape enhancements
- Sidewalk cafes, exterior improvements

### Promote and Brand the District

- District Marketing Strategy
- Community Message Boards
- District-wide promotion card

### Increase Business Diversity

### Provide Small Business Support

### Partner with Innovation Center/Dell Medical School





## Music, Culture and Arts

### Support and preserve the Red River Cultural District Designation

- Explore application through Texas Commission on the Arts

### Exposure within RRCD for local artists

### Provide low cost/free events to increase accessibility to the public

- Sponsorships

### Street activation through adoption of busking ordinance

### Integration of public art



**Music, Culture  
& Arts**

Preserve and grow  
businesses and institutions  
that express the rich  
cultural heritage of the city  
through live music, creative  
space and public art.



## Livability and Sustainability

### Institute a District-wide recycling program

### Develop partnership to increase safety in the District

- Monthly policy commander meetings

### Enhance a fun and exciting District identity

### Beautify the District

- Sidewalk planters, public art
- Creative sidewalk improvements
- Alley activation
- Sidewalk Cafes



**Livability &  
Sustainability**

Encourage safety,  
affordability, sustainable  
infrastructure and strong  
connections between  
commercial districts and  
their neighborhoods.



## Green Infrastructure

Connect and align to Waller Creek

Address storm water management in the District

Beautification projects

- Green wall and street trees



Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate green infrastructure practices and nature into the city.



## Red River Land Use and Regulations

Utilize public space and right of way to enhance business space

Reinvest parking meter revenue into the District

Develop and implement a strategy for loading zones

Collaborate with Waller Creek Conservancy



Promote regulations and developments that help small business, creative spaces and venues and commercial districts thrive.



## Connectivity and Transportation

Safe pedestrian access

Safe parking options in peak hours

Safe travel options

- Pedicabs, transit, B-Cycle



**Connectivity & Transportation**

Enhance walkability of the district, improve access to parking for employees and patrons and create more connections to diverse transit options.



## Policy Recommendations

- Sound Ordinance
- Creative Use Zoning
- Tax and Rent Stabilization





## Policy Alignment and Implementation

- Imagine Austin
- Music and Creative Ecosystem Omnibus
- Vision Vero
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Downtown Austin Plan
- Waller Creek District Master Plan
- Downtown PID Plan
- The Austin Music Census
- Austin Music People White Paper
- City of Austin Sustainability Action Agenda



## Next Steps

- Garner input from key stakeholders Downtown Austin Alliance, Waller Creek Conservancy, AMP, DANA, Downtown Commission etc. (July-August 2016)
- Integration of Cost estimates for infrastructure enhancements (Fall 2016)
- City Council Action (Fall 2016) \*pending





Thank you  
City of Austin Economic Development Department  
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